

# **Wildhorse C&H Allotment 2015 Annual Operating Instructions**

Salmon-Challis National Forest  
Lost River Ranger District  
PO Box 507  
Mackay, Idaho 83251

Approved By: /s/ **Diane L Weaver** **5/26/2015**

Diane L. Weaver  
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Date

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Date

Accepted By: /s/ **Herb Whitworth** **5/11/2015**

Herb Whitworth  
President, Wildhorse Grazing Association

Date

**Please sign and return this page to the above address**



## 2015 ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

### WILDHORSE ALLOTMENT

### SALMON-CHALLIS NATIONAL FOREST

Below is your Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) for the Wildhorse Allotment. This AOI addresses Forest Service administered lands within the Wildhorse Allotment and reflects information discussed during the spring meeting on April 17, 2015. Please review your Term Grazing Permit for grazing utilization, range improvement maintenance, and salting standards. Actual on, off and move-dates are dependant on range readiness and when allowable use standards are met. The Forest Service may approve changes to the grazing rotation in consultation with the permittees to address range condition situations that may occur due to weather related circumstances.

#### Permitted Cattle Authorized

<u>Permittee</u>	<u>Term</u>	<u>Season</u>	<u>Non-Use</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>Season</u>	<u>Brand</u>
Clint/Esther Bitton	104	6/9-9/30	104	0	6/9-9/30	
Dickey Livestock	491	6/9-9/30	138	353	6/9-9/30	
Walt Johnson	108	6/9-9/30	0	108	6/9-9/30	
VerNon Roche	51	6/9-9/30	0	51	6/9-9/30	
H. Whitworth Jr.	947	6/9-9/30	197	700	6/9-9/30	
				50	7/1-9/30	
<u>Logan E. Williams Jr.</u> <u>and Tyrel Williams</u>	191	6/9-9/30	0	191	6/9-9/30	
Total	1892		439	1453		

#### Grazing Unit Rotation

#### Estimated Days

Grant Cr.	30	6/9-7/8
East Fork	17	7/9-7/25
Wildhorse Creek/ Newton Cr	13	7/26-8/7
Kane & Summit Creek	14	8/8-8/21
North Fork & Tributaries	15	8/22-9/5
Lake Cr/Twin Bridges	17	9/6-9/22
Pinto/Burnt/Garden FS/BLM	8	9/23-9/30

**These dates are an estimate and may vary  $\pm$  2-5 days under normal circumstances. Moves will be authorized by Rangeland Manager based on resource conditions.**

Modifications to the grazing unit rotation and estimated days of use must be requested by the permittee in advance and approved by the Forest Service. The Forest Service may initiate modifications in consultation with the permittees when changes to scheduled use are needed due to unexpected deficiencies in range conditions such as but not limited to: predatory issues forage production, soil moisture, precipitation, insect damage, fire, hail, plant growth/recovery during drought condition.

The NRCS SNOTEL sites across the Lost River Ranger District currently range from 64-90% of the Water Year average through the month of March. The Upper Big Lost River ranges from 70-80% of average and the Stickney Mill SNOTEL site shows 80%. All indications show that cumulative drought impacts could persist or worsen this year. If this occurs the Forest Service expects that cattle may need to be moved more quickly through units and removed prior to the scheduled off date. Forage production is dependent on growing season (April through September) temperatures and precipitation. Even when drought conditions subside there is a lag time for plants to physically recover from the stress of the drought.

The permittees will provide two riders for the grazing season. An additional rider is required for the 10 days prior to entrance of the North Fork grazing unit and 10 days after cattle are removed from the unit. When cattle enter the Summit/Kane unit the permittees will provide a plan as to who and when for this extra riding. The permittees will have a rider daily on the fences and in Castle Creek while livestock are in that area. The lower fence in Castle Creek will be maintained by the Boone Creek permittees and the upper stretch by the Wildhorse permittees. Having the allotment flown to locate cattle was a good tool that was utilized in 2014 and is seen as beneficial in the 2015 season. With this rotation and dry weather watch for cattle crossing the East Fork of the Big Lost and making their way to Deep Creek and the North Fork early.

Cattle may be in up to 2 units simultaneously while trailing is occurring. Therefore, periods of use can overlap. Back riding is necessary to keep these units clean outside of authorized time periods.

Cattle will be discouraged from using the Kane Lake trailhead area and kept within the allotment boundary. The fence below Wildhorse Campground will be maintained and cattle will be kept out of the campground and above.

Kane Canyon: salt should be placed at least  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile below Kane Lake trailhead and in all areas  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile from water.

In the North Fork Unit cattle should be discouraged from concentrated grazing in the Grasshopper Creek drainage. Trailing and occasional cattle in this area are to be expected but loading the drainage with large numbers of livestock should be avoided.

The utilization levels on springs in the Twin Bridges unit should be monitored by range riders and should not exceed 50% utilization of woody or herbaceous species.

**Designated Monitoring Areas(DMA's):** DMA's are used to monitor representative riparian areas within a grazing unit which establishes a record of utilization and trend. The information from the DMA is also used to plan cattle moves, determine if end of season indicators are met, and to evaluate whether current management is effective or needs to be modified. Permittee monitoring, documentation and photos are encouraged before entering and when leaving each unit.

**Allowable Use Standard:** End of season 4-inch stubble height on hydric sedges & grasses is required along the greenline of riparian areas. A patchy or uneven use pattern along the greenline will usually result in stubble height standard being met. While adequate re-growth may occur under average growing season conditions, the opposite may be true during below average conditions. Special attention should be made to drier weather conditions. It is recommended a stubble height trigger above 4 inches be used to plan livestock moves.

The drier mesic meadows adjacent to streams and springs should be watched to ensure that 50% use is not exceeded. These meadows are of concern across the district and more focus is going to be put on use levels in these areas. While all adjacent meadows should be looked at, the drier meadows have less chance of re-growth and therefore are of highest concern. The upland annual use level of 50% should be used to manage the dry meadows and your rangeland management specialist will work with you to determine when a desired use level has been met, so that everyone understands what the meadows should look like after livestock use.

Riparian areas with greenlines dominated by Kentucky bluegrass and tufted hairgrass should also receive special attention to achieve end of season stubble height. Greenlines dominated by these plants have less bank stability than those dominated by deep-rooted plants and are sometimes in a lower state of ecological condition. They should be managed to increase the amount of stable hydric sedges, grasses, and shrubs where appropriate.

Woody browse use of riparian shrubs will not exceed 50% of new leader production.

Other factors should be considered for planning cattle moves between units. These include prevention of stream bank trampling, increase in rate of stubble height removal, changes in grazing preference from grasses and grass-like plants to young willows and other shrubs, large groups of cattle congregating in fence corners, at gates, or riparian areas for long periods of time.

**Cleaning Grazing Units:** Livestock need to begin moving from a unit prior to the stubble height standard being met to ensure allowable use standards are met. This is especially important during drought conditions. In most cases 7 days should be adequate. Permittees should be prepared to assist range riders in checking that the unit cleaned stays clean. Permittee back riding is of great importance to ensure that riders are addressing the management of the main herd. Range riders should keep permittees informed of problems cleaning grazed units. Bulls should be kept with the main herd or removed from the allotment when they disrupt herd management. Frequent back-riding indicates there is

a herd management problem. It is also the permittee's responsibility to correct problems caused by drift from other units.

The grazing units should be used more evenly. There has been a tendency to use the early units heavier than the late units.

**Fence & Water Improvements:** Please refer to Part 3 of your Term Grazing Permit. Allotment boundary fences should be maintained prior to cattle entering the allotment, interior fences should also be maintained prior to cattle entering a new unit. Existing improvements should be maintained each year before requesting new improvements.

The Wildhorse Campground fence will be maintained by the permittees to ensure that livestock do not graze above it.

A temporary electric fence will need to be placed at the bottom of the North Fork Unit to ensure that the lower boundary is secure.

**Weed Free Hay:** In accordance with State Law, please ensure that range riders bring hay that is certified and tagged noxious weed free.

**Gray Wolf:** The Wildhorse Allotment is an area of known wolf activity. Any knowledge of wolf activity on the allotment needs to be exchanged between the permittees and the Forest Service.

**Grazing Fees:** The grazing fees for the 2015 season are \$1.69/head month. Your grazing fee payment will need to be received prior to turning livestock out on the National Forest. Receipt of payment could take up to 2 weeks from the date payment is sent.

**Actual Use Report:** An Actual Use Report will be mailed to you shortly before cattle leave the allotment. This form is to be completed and returned to the Lost River Ranger District two weeks after you have removed livestock from your allotment. The association President will need to provide a consolidated report with the numbers and dates when cattle entered the allotment, moved from unit to unit, when cattle were removed from the allotment. Each permittee will need to provide an individual report with dates when their cattle entered and left the allotment.

This information is used for the purpose of evaluating and analyzing: grazing allotment and grazing unit use, compliance with annual operating instructions, and planning next season's grazing management strategy

Applications for credit for unused portions of your allotment must be requested and filed separately. Please contact our office if you need an application for refund/credit.

Questions and assistance regarding these instructions should be directed to Diane Weaver or the District Rangeland Management Specialist at 588-3400.